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ABS Corporate Plan

The ABS Corporate Plan outlines the role of the ABS as a national statistical agency and the future directions of the organisation

Reference period: 2022-23 financial year

30/08/2022

Foreword



The ABS is among the most trusted institutions of government. Quality and objectivity are hallmarks of our data, statistics and insights.

The ABS has shown its value as a rich source of data and information with our supply of more timely data during the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently the high-risk weather season. This has been possible because of the investment in the ABS which enabled us to enhance our systems, to innovate and to build capability. This will continue across the period of this Plan.

The ABS is also leading the Australian Public Service (APS) uplift in data capabilities through the Data Profession, in partnership with the Australian Public Service Commission. The ABS has been working across the APS to develop the foundations and specific offerings to support both generalist and specialist data skills in the public sector.

The current pace and scale of change within the ABS is unprecedented with the rapid emergence of new data sources from both the public and private sectors. This Plan supports the ABS' continued role to make the most of these new data sources to inform policies, guide decision making, reduce the reporting burden on survey respondents and respond to future crises. It positions the ABS to sustain the shift to more timely and responsive data, statistics and insights.

Statement of Preparation

As the Accountable Authority of the ABS, I am pleased to present the 2022-23 ABS Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2022-23 to 2025-26, in accordance with the requirements of section 35(1)(b) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00269>).

Purpose

Legislation

The primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS are set out in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 and the Census and Statistics Act 1905.

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority and legislates its main function as the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and provider of services for state and territory governments.
- The Census and Statistics Act 1905 empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental and social topics and contains strong provisions to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.
- The Census and Statistics (Information Release and Access) Determination 2018 enables the Statistician to release information collected under the Census and Statistics Act 1905 when specific conditions are met.

The ABS must comply with the governance and accountability system defined by the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. The ABS must also comply with a range of legislation including the Public Service Act 1999, the Freedom of Information Act 1982, the Privacy Act 1988 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013.

Purpose

To inform Australia's important decisions by delivering relevant, trusted and objective data, statistics and insights.

Role

The ABS is Australia's national statistical agency. It provides trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia.

The ABS has leadership roles in maximising the use of public data for statistical purposes and improving the Australian Government's data and statistical capabilities. The ABS advises official bodies on producing and using data and statistics, formulates standards, works with Australian States and Territories and liaises internationally.

Priorities

The Australian Statistician articulates ABS strategic priorities to ensure activities planned and executed are coherent, complementary and coordinated.

The ABS currently has five enterprise-level strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Produce high quality statistics

Priority 2: Generate timely new insights

Priority 3: Exercise leadership in the data landscape

Priority 4: Reduce burden on data providers

Priority 5: Enhance organisational capability, resilience and adaptability.

Operating context

Environment

Data and digital skills are in high demand

The ABS needs staff skilled in data design, integration, analysis and handling. These skills are in high demand across the public and private sectors. As other Commonwealth agencies build their own capability, they are also turning to the ABS for experienced data specialists. Competition for graduates is also contributing to the recruitment and retention challenges in this specialist labour market.

Private sector businesses are also increasingly recognising the value of the data they hold and looking for employees with the ability to commercialise it. The higher entry salaries offered by these employers is attractive to new graduates. The ABS and the Australian Public Service (APS) are having to work harder to highlight the advantages offered by the public service in skills mentoring and development, subject matter diversity, the community value of its work and the breadth of innovation in new areas such as machine learning.

New businesses offering data services are also entering the marketplace, adding to the demand for trained data specialists.

This larger marketplace and talent pool may create a potential future source of skilled staff for the ABS and APS.

More data is becoming available

The ABS is looking to use large commercial data sets to validate survey data and improve the timeliness of statistics.

New collaborations between government agencies are also leading to better use of large government datasets. These collaborations are improving the management of data in government organisations, providing richer data for the ABS to develop new insights and replacing ABS collection activity with data already available. The ABS is also supporting early efforts to develop 'data lakes', accessible to certified agencies, to improve the efficiency of data sharing and use in government. With an expansion of collaboration across government agencies, the ABS is becoming a key service provider.

The passing of the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022 on 31 March 2022 will help to create opportunities to share data sensibly and securely across accredited organisations.

Clients want more complex data

Government organisations are also seeking more detailed statistical information to inform more complex analysis and assessments. Demand is increasing for location-enriched data. This allows for more precise identification of support needs and targeting of government services.

Data providers want information collected and used efficiently

The cooperation of the Australian community and businesses to provide data to the ABS ensures we can deliver quality statistics and generate new insights to inform policy and guide decision making. However, increasingly the Australian community and businesses expect governments to collect data once, share it appropriately and use it many times.

Businesses want the ABS to simplify the collection process or limit the data it needs. Businesses expect the ABS to use existing or alternative data where it is available and reduce the length of surveys where the information is not crucial to informing key decisions.

While the ABS continues to use household surveys to inform topics of national importance, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected our capacity to collect data directly from people. People are less willing to participate in surveys on topics like domestic violence than they were before the pandemic. The tight labour market makes it harder to attract and retain interviewers to undertake surveys rendering surveys more expensive to conduct. While there are no short-term solutions, plans are in place to improve our ability to conduct household surveys in the future including:

- taking advantage of the spread of technology in homes to increase flexible contact arrangements like video interviewing
- using pre-filled forms where possible, so people need only confirm details rather than enter them manually from

difficult to access records

- maximising the use of existing data in line with privacy and information security obligations.

Cooperation

The ABS cooperates with Commonwealth, state and territory government organisations and is increasing its engagement with the private sector.

The ABS cooperates with many organisations to make better use of existing datasets to limit survey activity. The ABS is also working with accountants, bookkeepers and accounting software providers to streamline the way small and medium businesses report their financial data.

The ABS receives funding from other government agencies to undertake surveys and integrate data on their behalf. The ABS is currently working in partnership with other Australian government agencies in areas such as health and welfare, climate, the economy, demography and education.

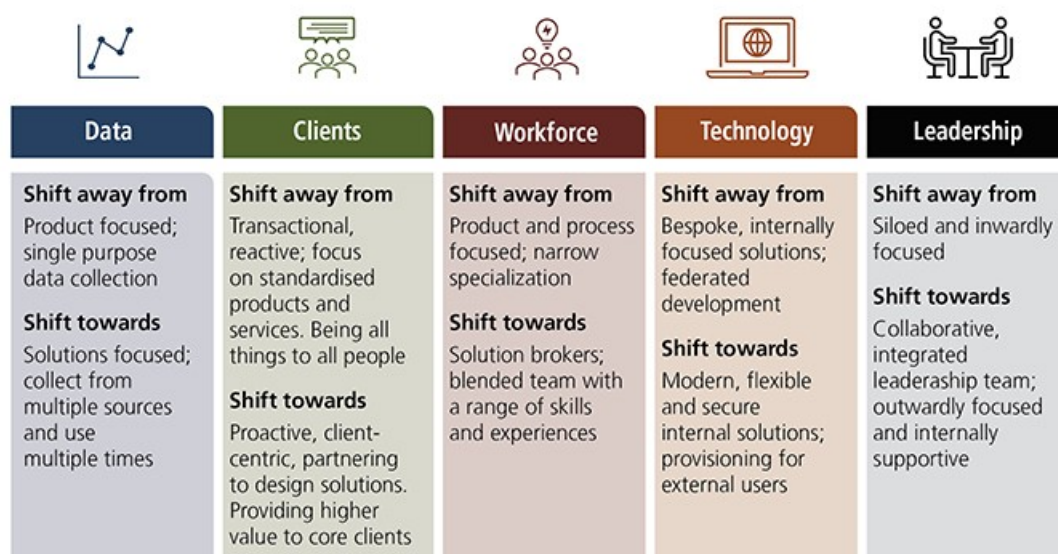
The ABS engages with businesses such as supermarkets to use their datasets to create new statistics and generate new insights. The ABS also cooperates with other national statistical organisations and international organisations to maintain internationally recognised statistical standards.

The ABS is committed to early and ongoing conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure all surveys are done in a culturally appropriate way and reflect the priorities, values and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Strategies for delivering capability

The ABS has a capable, resilient, agile and engaged workforce.

The ABS has strategies to respond to the opportunities and demands of its environment. These strategies will shift how the ABS collects and protects data, engages with its clients, shapes its workforce, modernises its technologies and strengthens its leadership.



This diagram describes the five ways in which the ABS is changing the way it operates. These address how the ABS will collect and protect data, engage with its clients, shape its workforce, modernise its technologies and strengthen its leadership. Data: Shift away from: Product focused; single purpose data collection Shift towards: Solutions focused; collect from multiple sources and use multiple times Clients: Shift away from: Transactional, reactive; focus on standardised

products and services. Being all things to all people Shift towards: Proactive, client-centric, partnering to design solutions. Providing higher value to core clients Workforce: Shift away from: Product and process focused; narrow specialisation Shift towards: Solution brokers; blended team with a range of skills and experiences Technology: Shift away from: Bespoke, internally focused solutions; federated development Shift towards: Modern, flexible and secure internal solutions; provisioning for external users Leadership: Shift away from: Siloed and inwardly focused Shift towards: Collaborative, integrated leadership team; outwardly focused and internally supportive

The ABS aims to shift the balance toward a future end state of:

- providing easier access to, and integration of, the data it holds
- routinely using alternative data sources to enhance official statistics
- actively co-designing solutions with clients for mutual benefit
- being an employer of choice that values and develops staff
- being the provider of choice for data solutions, big data access and support for data issues
- enhancing data capabilities across government through shared technologies and skills
- fostering a culture of high performance and innovation.

Risk oversight and management

The ABS risk framework is fully aligned with the Commonwealth Risk Management Framework and is updated biennially to ensure better practice is applied within the organisation. A set of documented strategic priorities is used to ensure risk management is relevant and aligned across the organisation. The ABS builds clear lines of sight from branch-level operations through to enterprise-level goals and strategy.

Managers at all levels are accountable for managing risks to their objectives by establishing monitoring and control activities proportionate to the level of risk.

ABS governance bodies enable collective and coordinated responses to risk by enabling investment in controls for common or systemic risks, supporting effective escalation of higher-level risks and overseeing the efforts of line managers addressing lower-level risks.

The ABS risk culture is built on smart risk taking - finding opportunities in uncertainty and applying informed risk management practices to undertake innovative projects. The ABS applies caution when core business deliverables are involved but accepts sensible risk-taking leads to improvement.

Strategic and operational uncertainties

The ABS faces numerous strategic and operational uncertainties including:

- increasing difficulty collecting data from households and businesses
- increasing competition for skilled statisticians and data scientists
- persistent threat of sophisticated cyber-security attack
- increasing numbers of, and competition from, providers of data and data capability
- reliance on bespoke systems and processes unable to support emerging statistical methods.

Priorities and activities

Priority 1 - Produce high quality statistics

The ABS collects and analyses a broad range of social, economic, business, population and environmental data and produces valuable statistics to inform Australia's important decisions.

Activities

Economic, Industry, Location and Environmental Statistics

The ABS continues to release statistical products to meet the demands of government, businesses and society. This includes aiding the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and informing the national response to natural disasters such as fires and floods across Australia.

Australian Climate Service: in response to the Royal Commission into the 2019 bushfires, the ABS is partnering with the Bureau of Meteorology, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Geoscience Australia to bring together climate and natural hazard information. The ABS brings key social and economic data to the service, by providing detailed information on who is potentially exposed and how vulnerable they may be to natural hazards. This information provides a comprehensive picture of the vulnerability of locations to help prevent or prepare for natural hazards.

Agricultural Census: the ABS conducted the five-yearly Agricultural Census in 2021–22 to provide benchmark national, state and regional data to support research and decision making by governments and businesses. Statistics from the Agricultural Census were released in July 2022.

Themed (satellite) accounts: these accounts provide insights into non-standard industries and/or emerging areas of interest, not readily visible from ABS' key economic and social outputs. Working in partnership with other agencies, the ABS can pull together data from a wide variety of sources to create focused information on a particular area of interest.

In 2022–23, the ABS will develop:

- [Australian Defence Industry Account \(/statistics/research/australian-defence-industry-account-feasibility-study-outcomes\)](#) – working with the Department of Defence to measure the contribution of the defence industry to the Australian economy. The ABS is co-designing an innovative approach, making use of Defence's own financial data, alongside other existing data sources, to produce estimates of direct gross domestic product (GDP), value added and employment.
- [Tourism Satellite Account \(/statistics/economy/national-accounts/australian-national-accounts-tourism-satellite-account/latest-release\)](#) – in a partnership with Austrade spanning over 20 years, ABS produces estimates of tourism's direct contribution to the economy including GDP, value added, employment and consumption by product and industry. Austrade uses ABS data to produce state-based tourism satellite accounts, and academics and consultants use the data to produce estimates for smaller geographic areas or events.
- [Transport Economic Account \(/statistics/economy/national-accounts/australian-transport-economic-account-experimental-transport-satellite-account/latest-release\)](#) – in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, this account estimates the total contribution of transport activity across the economy including GDP, value added and employment.
- **Ocean Account** – ABS is partnering with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to develop Australia's first national ocean ecosystem account for Australia's marine industries.

Population, Labour and Social Statistics

The ABS population, labour and social statistics program produces information about Australia's population, including size and composition and measures of social and economic wellbeing. The ABS continues to produce rapid and frequent information about the labour market using Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Single Touch Payroll (STP) data. The ABS will also continue to deliver statistics such as quarterly population estimates required by legislation.

Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study (IHMHS): the IHMHS will be the largest health study undertaken in Australian history. The IHMHS will provide the most complete picture of the country's physical and mental health, providing insights into the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's mental health and wellbeing. The information collected by the ABS from a range of data sources, including Census, surveys, administrative and other non-survey data, will underpin the creation, delivery and evaluation of health policies and research over many years and will provide an evidence base to support Australians to live longer and healthier lives.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO): will be reviewed and updated to ensure ABS statistics, 2026 Census data in particular, reflect the contemporary Australian labour market. A coding tool, co-designed

with and for use by, other Australian Government agencies will also be delivered to support use of the updated classifications in datasets held across governments. The ABS is also participating in international work to update the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) to ensure it continues to reflect modern economic activity.

Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers: presents key information about disability prevalence in Australia as well as data about older Australians (aged 65 years and over). The survey will also collect information about people with disability who reported they had experienced discrimination.

Estimated Resident Population: update of the series to reflect a new base population provided by the 2021 Census. Estimates of Indigenous and regional populations will be released during 2022–23.

2021 and 2026 Census of Population and Housing

Every five years the ABS gains rich insights into how Australians live through the Population Census. This interaction with every household in the country creates a detailed and comprehensive dataset to help inform decisions shaping communities and regions. Data from the Census is used directly and is also a key input to other ABS statistics and integrated data assets.

The first release of 2021 Census data in June 2022 delivered a contemporary picture of Australians living through a global pandemic and recovering from natural disasters. There is considerable interest in the changing age distribution and cultural backgrounds of the population, household income and ownership and mortgage/rent payments. For the first time, the latest Census collected data on former and current military service and long-term health conditions. Census data on some topics, such as employment, internal migration, travel to work and homelessness, will be available in late 2022 and early 2023.

The ABS has commenced planning for the next Census in 2026.

Priority 2 - Generate timely new insights

The ABS uses a range of survey and non-survey data to create insights into aspects of our nation. Key clients and users of ABS data and statistics are engaged to ensure innovative statistical products are relevant and valued. The ABS continues to build relationships with all levels of Australian government, academia, business and the not-for-profit sector. Through these collaborative efforts, the ABS can provide statistical information for governments to assess the effectiveness of economic, social and environmental policies and present insights to inform ongoing development.

Activities

Data integration projects

The ABS is continuing to explore new data sources to address emerging information needs, augment existing products and validate existing methodologies. This work will continue to inform social, environmental, economic, health and other policy issues.

The ABS is responsible for linking data from a range of sources, providing access to authorised users via secure ABS systems and safeguarding the data.

In partnership with other agencies, the ABS supports the analysis of integrated data including through two key integrated longitudinal data assets:

- Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) integrates ABS business survey data, business taxation data from the ATO and other administrative data sources. BLADE includes data for businesses active in the Australian economy at any time from 2001–02 to the current financial year. Over the past few years, the data available in BLADE has been updated more often and new datasets added.
- The Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) contains high-value, people-centred and regularly updated datasets

aimed at providing comprehensive coverage of the Australian population. It is a secure data asset combining a broad range of information on health, education, government payments, income, taxation, employment and population demographics, and can be used to answer complex social and economic policy questions. The data is provided by a range of departments and agencies including the ATO, Department of Education, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Aged Care, and Department of Home Affairs.

For 2022–23, approved ABS and collaborative projects supported through BLADE and MADIP include:

- Adapting projects established to inform early responses to COVID-19 to provide insights into ongoing effects on the community and economy.
- Linking the Australian Immunisation Register dataset and deaths data to MADIP to generate insights for the Australian COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Strategy. This project enables timely analysis of vaccine uptake and health outcomes across socio-demographic cohorts and geographic areas.
- Providing information on mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic, including information about COVID-19 deaths, demographic details, comorbidities and consequences of the disease.
- Monitoring the labour market and the Australian economy during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Labour Market Tracker Project, where job-related data, including ATO's STP data, is integrated with MADIP and BLADE.
- Contributing to an evidence base to support cross-agency analysis of vulnerability and resilience of people and businesses in natural disasters, supporting the National Emergency Management, Resilience and Recovery Agency.
- Integrating MADIP data and other jurisdictional education data to measure youth pathways, post-school destinations and participation in tertiary education and employment.
- Building knowledge of the specialist homelessness services workforce in Victoria. The data and insights will support decision making to strengthen and grow the workforce and set recruitment and retention goals towards a more diverse, sustainable and suitably qualified workforce.
- Enhancing MADIP by creating new and more valuable datasets by combining 2021 Census data with data from other sources.
- Enhancing BLADE with new data sources to ensure it remains relevant and contemporary.

Crime and justice: a pilot to assess the feasibility of linking crime and justice data with other social datasets. The project aims to develop a comprehensive data asset which would enable reporting on topics such as family, domestic and sexual violence, providing a more complete picture and greater insights into the life outcomes of perpetrators of crime.

Justice Spine: a longitudinal national data asset linking police recorded criminal offenders in Australia's criminal courts with adult prisoners in the corrective services systems. The dataset will show how people move and interact within and across the justice system nationally, something currently not possible. The dataset can potentially link with other Commonwealth, state and territory held datasets for deeper analysis of criminal offenders. The dataset will be available to approved policy makers and researchers in 2023 and will provide insights into patterns of offending and recidivism.

National Disability Data Asset (NDDA): is under development and will add a new enduring national asset comprising a collection of linked, de-identified data from across multiple Commonwealth, state and territory service systems on people with disability and their pathways through services. The NDDA will be enabled by the development of a new data integration infrastructure, known as the Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure (ANDII). The ABS, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and Department of Social Services are leading the development of ANDII and NDDA in collaboration with the Commonwealth, states and territories and the disability sector.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) National Data Asset: will provide insights about outcomes for students who participate in VET courses through integration of VET data with MADIP and BLADE, into the VET National Data Asset. These insights include whether graduates from the VET sector gain employment or do further study and how participating in VET affects their future income or their need for government assistance.

New statistics

The ABS is using non-survey data to deliver more timely indicators of the Australian economy, society and environment, including:

- Payroll jobs and wages estimates, sourced from the ATO's Single Touch Payroll (STP) data. The ATO receives payroll information from employers with STP enabled payroll and accounting software each time the employer runs its payroll. The ATO provides employer and job level data items on 10 million employees from the STP system to the ABS to produce the Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia publication.
- More frequent and more geographically detailed information to help better understand regional labour markets by combining existing survey data (like monthly Labour Force) with existing datasets including the ATO's STP data.
- A set of monthly economic indicators: business turnover (using monthly Business Activity Statement data), household spending (using bank transactions data), and earnings of employees (using the ATO's STP data).
- A monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) indicator to complement the quarterly CPI. Each month, this indicator will update approximately 70 percent of the prices in the CPI basket of goods and services.
- New quarterly estimates of dwelling stock for much smaller geographic areas than currently available to inform housing and homelessness policy. This new series will provide insights into how housing supply responds to economic developments including changes in house prices, rent and population growth. The ABS is also exploring the development of new indicators of land and housing supply using local government zoning and land use information.
- A new gender indicators series will be a single source of ABS data, informing initiatives to improve women's workforce participation, advance workplace equality and strengthen women's economic security.
- Data and expertise as part of a cross-Government collaboration on supply chain resilience to assist in developing targeted and proportionate responses to disruption risk in supply chains of priority commodities.
- Assistance to the Climate Change Authority on a framework for measuring the transition to a low emissions economy. The ABS will support the Authority to undertake a climate risk assessment and identify relevant data sources.

The ABS is also investigating the production of new real-time data on the characteristics of Australian businesses and their owners and the performance and dynamism of businesses, by bringing together Australian Business Register data and new data sources (such as the ATO's STP). Businesses are experiencing the effects of disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters in different ways across sectors, types of businesses and regions. These data would improve understanding of how the economy is evolving, including its response to economic shocks and natural disasters.

Priority 3 - Exercise leadership in the data landscape

The ABS is leading the APS Data Professional Stream, aimed at strengthening data capability across the APS. The ABS, along with 25 other agencies, is progressing the initial two-year work program for the Data Professional Stream, including the training of specialised data graduates and improving data skills and literacy more broadly across the APS workforce.

The Australian Statistician is also a member of the National Data Advisory Council, established under the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022. In this capacity, he advises the National Data Commissioner on using and sharing public sector data including on ethical data use, balancing data availability with privacy protection, trust and transparency, technical best practice, industry and international developments and community expectations.

The ABS also looks after some of the nation's most important and influential data. Users expect the ABS to continually improve access to its products and services.

Activities

Data Profession

The ABS is leading the whole of APS uplift in data capabilities. The Australian Statistician is the Head of the Data Profession, working closely with the Australian Public Service Commission and Head of the Digital Profession.

The ABS will support the delivery of the following activities to develop workforce capability:

- Developing a Data Capability Framework and capability assessment tool to use across the APS. This will assist individuals and managers to identify areas for technical development, support career planning discussions and assist agencies to benchmark workforce capability and identify skills gaps.
- Developing and rolling out data literacy learning pathways to help ensure all APS employees have foundational data skills.
- Building development-focused opportunities for people in data roles.

Improve access to ABS statistics

The ABS is committed to continuing to improve access to its statistics and data, while maintaining privacy and ensuring confidentiality of the data.

ABS portals and platforms: users access statistics through a range of self-serve portals and platforms; including the ABS website, DataLab, TableBuilder and customised data requests. Users of ABS statistics can access data freely on the ABS website or by configuring their systems to an application programming interface (API). Machine-to-machine access provides a fast avenue for regular users to import data into their systems. Advanced analysis and complex research are enabled through access to microdata products in the ABS DataLab. This service is cost recovered from users undertaking approved projects.

Social media platforms: the ABS uses social media platforms to engage with the Australian public. The ABS will release a range of snapshots and infographics on its social media platforms, providing notice of key upcoming releases and highlighting topical statistics.

Improved access for cultural groups and organisations: the ABS is committed to the return of information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, delivering data in formats both useful and culturally appropriate.

Priority 4 - Reduce burden on data providers

The ABS is committed to collecting information in the most efficient way possible and reducing the burden on those providing data used to create ABS products and services.

Activities

Increasing the use of non-survey data as a preferred source

The ABS is increasing its use of non-survey data, including data collected by governments and businesses, to reduce the need to conduct surveys. The ABS will continue to progress the following projects to explore how this data might be used to deliver more timely indicators with greater geographic and industry detail:

- Produce new monthly indicators: produce the Monthly Business Turnover Indicator, Monthly Household Spending Indicator and Monthly Earnings Indicator to inform economic policy, through the Big Data Timely Insights (BDTI) project.
- Modernising Agricultural Statistics Program: reduce the agricultural surveys program where alternative data sources are available, commencing with the cessation of the Agricultural Census and the Wool Receipts, Purchases and Sales Survey; and continue to pursue opportunities to use existing and emerging alternative data and new statistical methods to support further consolidation of the program, such as the re-use for statistical purposes of the Levy Payer Registers data collected by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- Re-imagining Household Expenditure: replace the two-yearly Survey of Income and Housing, and six-yearly Household Expenditure Survey with a combination of survey and non-survey data from the private and public sectors, collecting survey data via web/mobile collection methods where possible.

Reduce burden for small and medium sized businesses

Accounting software project: the ABS is working with businesses, accountants, bookkeepers and accounting software

companies to co-design a new reporting application providing links with software businesses are already using. This means businesses can report their data more quickly and easily using existing business reporting systems, with the ABS estimating a 70% reduction in survey completion time for small and medium businesses. Businesses will be able to report more quickly to the Quarterly Business Indicators Survey (QBIS), Capital Expenditures (CAPEX) and the Economic Activity Survey (EAS).

Priority 5 - Enhance organisational capability, resilience and adaptability

The ABS strives to be an effective, efficient and flexible agency cooperating across Government. The ABS is committed to creating a collaborative, accountable, agile innovative and customer-focused agency.

Activities

Capability shifts

Over the last two years, through natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, our workforce has demonstrated exceptional levels of adaptability and responsiveness. The ABS shifted its work program and operations to deliver new surveys and near real-time insights, delivered a successful 2021 Census and continued to release the core statistical outputs.

The ABS will continue to deliver on its Enterprise Strategy, setting out its future vision for how it manages data, works collaboratively with clients, grows and develops its workforce, modernises its technology and continues to build its leadership capability.

Workforce capability: the ABS is strengthening staff capability to ensure we remain a highly professional, statistically expert and data capable workforce that continues to adapt to meet the changing information needs of governments, businesses and the community.

Data capability: the ABS will continue to grow its capability in cloud technologies and contemporary data tools and frameworks. The new cloud-based capabilities, along with re-engineering of some surveys, will enable a more resilient processing environment and improve its ability to blend survey and non-survey data.

Digital capability: the ABS is delivering platforms available to other agencies and clients including:

- establishing the Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure
- making the ABS DataLab available for secure data analysis by other agencies
- delivering a coding service enabling data holders to code their data to updated ABS classifications.

The ABS is taking advantage of mature cloud services to deliver scalable and secure solutions. Through the BDTI project, the ABS is developing cloud-based solutions to support the processing and analysis of both survey and non-survey data sources. The use of cloud technologies provides a more flexible and scalable environment for producing statistics and statistical insights.

Data sharing: the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022 establishes a new best practice scheme for sharing Australian Government data. The scheme is focused on increasing the availability and use of Australian Government data to improve government service delivery, inform better government policies and programs and support world leading research and development. As an Accredited Integrated Authority, the ABS will transition under the scheme to become an Accredited Data Service Provider (ADSP).

Forward Work Program

ABS Forward Work Program

The Forward Work Program (FWP) provides the schedule of statistical releases over the next four years. This program does not include experimental estimates and research papers. In addition to the official releases listed in this program, the ABS generates several customised data products to meet the needs of specific clients.

This program was developed through extensive consultation with government, key stakeholders including users of statistics, other government organisations and a range of non-government organisations such as community groups and industry bodies.

The ABS reviews and makes changes to the FWP to ensure it continues to appropriately measure the Australian economy, environment and society.

Statistical releases are classified into three tiers to assist with prioritising resources. This tiering was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Tier 1

Statistics providing the foundation work of a national statistical organisation.

Tier 2

Important areas of statistics where there is a significant government outlay or where there is a significant public policy interest.

Tier 3

Other important statistical work currently undertaken to meet identified user requirements.

Year of release

Release	Tier	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Release
Labour Market					
Average Weekly Earnings, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Six-monthly
Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia	T2		✓		✓ Two-yearly
Characteristics of Employment, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Employee earnings		✓	✓	✓	✓
Working arrangements		✓	✓	✓	✓
Trade union membership		✓			
Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia	T1		✓		✓ Two-yearly
Employment and Earnings, Public Sector, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Industrial Disputes, Australia	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Job Vacancies	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Jobs in Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Labour Account, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Labour Force Status of Families	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Labour Force, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia	T2				Yearly
Job mobility		✓	✓	✓	✓
Potential workers		✓	✓	✓	✓
Underemployed workers		✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal Income in Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia	T2		✓		✓ Two-yearly
Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Work Related Injuries	T2	✓			Four-yearly
Economic					
Australian Industry	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Assets and Liabilities of Australian Securitisers	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Australian National Accounts: Distribution of Household Income, Consumption and Wealth	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Two-yearly
Australian System of National Accounts	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Balance of Payments and International Investment Position	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Building Activity and Engineering Construction	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Building Approvals	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Business Characteristics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Business Turnover	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly

Release	Tier	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Release
Characteristics of Australian Exporters	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly and
Estimates of Industry Level KLEMS Multifactor Productivity	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Estimates of Industry Multifactor Productivity	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Finance and Wealth	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Government Finance Statistics	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Government Finance Statistics, Annual	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Government Finance Statistics, Education ¹	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Input-Output Tables	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
International Investment Position, Australia: Supplementary Statistics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
International Trade in Goods and Services	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
International Trade: Supplementary Information, Calendar Year	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
International Trade: Supplementary Information, Financial Year	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Lending Indicators	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Managed Funds	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Mineral and Petroleum Exploration	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Modellers' Database	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Monthly Business Turnover Indicator	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Monthly Household Spending Indicator	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
National Income, Expenditure and Product	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Quarterly Business Indicators	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Research and Development Expenditure	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Retail Trade Survey	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
State Accounts	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Supply Use Tables	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Taxation Revenue, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Price Indicators					
Consumer Price Index	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Consumer Price Index indicator	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
International Trade Price Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Producer Price Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly

Release	Tier	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Release
Selected Living Cost Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Total Value of Dwellings	I2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Wage Price Index	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Demographic					
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Life Expectancy	T2		✓		Five-year
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population Estimates and Projections	T2		✓		Five-year
Australian Historical Population Statistics	T3		✓		Five-year
Births and Deaths	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Causes of Death	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Household and Family Projections	T1		✓		Five-year
Life Expectancy	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Marriages and Divorces	I3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Overseas Arrivals and Departures	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Monthly
Population Projections	T2		✓		Five-year
Quarterly Estimated Resident Population by State, including Net Overseas Migration	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Regional Population Statistics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Environmental and Sectorial					
Agricultural Census	T2				Five-year
Agricultural Commodities	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Energy Account	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Energy Use and Electricity Generation	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Tourism Satellite Account	I3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Quarterly
Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Water Account	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Social²					
Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia	T3			✓	Four-year
Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset	T3	✓			Five-year
Australian Census Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset	T3		✓		Five-year
Crime: prisoners, criminal courts, crime victimisation, recorded crime	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Gender Indicators	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
General Social Survey	T3		✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Indicators of Migrant Outcomes	I2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Irregular
Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study	T3				Irregular
National Study of Mental		✓	✓		

Release	Tier	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 Release
Health and Wellbeing					
National Health Survey			✓	✓	
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey			✓		
National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey—for the general population and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples				✓	
National Health Measures Survey—for the general population and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples				✓	
Living Costs in Australia Survey ³	T1			✓	Two-yea
National Health Survey	T2	✓			✓ Three-ye
Patient Experience Survey	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Personal Safety Survey	T3				✓ Four-yea
Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers	T2	✓			✓ Three-ye
Survey of Education and Work	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓ Yearly
Survey of Income and Housing ⁴	T1	✓			Two-yea
Survey of Qualifications and Work	T3	✓			Four-yea
Time Use Survey ⁵	T1	✓		✓	Two-yea
Work Related Training and Adult Learning Survey	T2			✓	Four-yea
Census					
Population and Housing	T1	✓			Five-yea
Post Enumeration Survey ⁶	T1				Five-yea
Other					
Australian Statistician's Analytical Series	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Ad-hoc
Data by Region	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓ Six-mont

1. The Government Finance Statistics, Education release will be combined with the Government Finance Statistics, Annual release. All data available in the release in 2021-22 will be available in the Government Finance Statistics Annual publication in 2022-23.

2. Household Impacts of COVID-19 ceased with final release in July 2021. It was then reinstated for February, March and April 2022.

3. The Household Expenditure Survey (previously a six-yearly release) and the Survey of Income and Housing (previously a two-yearly release) are being combined into the Living Costs in Australia Survey which will be released on a two-yearly basis, from 2024-25.

4. An extra cycle of the Survey of Income and Housing was run in 2020-21, with results to be published in 2022-23, to help measure the impact of COVID-19 on Australian households.

5. Previously an annual collection, the Time Use Survey is released on a two-yearly basis for the life of this Plan (2022-23 to 2025-26).

The ongoing frequency of this collection is currently under review.

6. The Post Enumeration Survey is known to respondents as the Post Census Review; it is next due for release in 2026-27.

Performance Measures and Targets

- Performance measures meet the requirements of section 16EA of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.
- Performance measures have been adopted for Priorities One to Four only. Measures of Priority Five are inherently input-focused and are therefore monitored internally by the business.
- Targets have been provided for each performance measure where it is reasonable to do so.

Priority 1: Produce high quality statistics

1.1 Trust in ABS statistics - level of trust in the ABS and its statistics

Method	Targets	Years measured
Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey (CTASS)	At least 85% level of trust in the ABS and ABS statistics	2024-25
Number of statistics released free of significant errors ¹	100% of statistics are released free of significant errors	2022-23 to 2025-26

1.2 International compliance - ABS statistics meet the standards for National and International Accounts, Labour Force, Unemployment, Consumer Price Index, and Estimated Resident Population

Method	Target	Years measured
Compliance with International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) ²	IMF assess ABS to be 100% compliant with SDDS for in-scope collections	2022-23 to 2025-26

1.3 Conduct the Census³ - implementation of the Census to deliver trusted data⁴

Method	Targets	Years measured
Release of the first statistics from the 2021 Census within 12 months of Census night	First release of Census data occurs before 10 August 2022	2022-23
Complete public consultation on 2026 Census topics	Publish 2026 Census Topic Directions	2023-24
Finalise 2026 Census topics	Regulations are updated to define Census topics	2024-25
Successful completion of the 2026 Census test in 2025	2025 Census test is completed and the evaluation report is agreed and accepted by the 2026 Census governance forum	2025-26

Priority 2: Generate timely new insights

2.1 Stakeholder needs are met - new statistics or insights are used to inform priority policy or decisions

Method	Case studies ⁵	Year measured ⁶
Case studies showing how new statistics or insights are used by clients	1. Assessment of the benefits to business and governments of capturing changes in the Australian labour market by updating the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). 2. Assessment of the benefits for various stakeholders of using administrative datasets to produce a monthly Consumer Price Index indicator.	2022–23

Priority 3: Exercise leadership in the data landscape

3.1 Access to ABS data and statistics - access to data products and services

Method	Targets ⁷	Years measured
Composite index of channel access:		
• Calls to API service	106	2022–23
• Number of DataLab sessions	108	2023–24
• Invoices for customised data services	111	2024–25
• Count of ABS website sessions	114	2025–26
• Registered users of TableBuilder		

3.2 Delivery of data peer learning opportunities to APS employees⁸

Method	Targets	Years measured
Number of peer learning offerings delivered through, for example,	No target - benchmarking year	2022–23
specialist speaker series, Data Profession Technical Fora	5 percent increase on benchmark	2023–24
and	5 percent increase on benchmark	2024–25
other data profession engagements	5 percent increase on benchmark	2025–26

Priority 4: Reduce burden on data providers

4.1 Efficiency of statistical operations - improve efficiency with which data is collected

Method	Case studies	Year measured ⁹
Case studies showing efficiencies made in collecting data for statistical purposes	1. New ways of reporting to significantly reduce burden for small and medium businesses. 2. Feasibility of establishing a national crime and justice data asset and reporting system.	2022–23

4.2 Burden on survey respondents - time taken to complete business surveys

Method	Targets ¹⁰	Years measured
Total time taken for survey respondents to complete business surveys	6.5 percent decrease on benchmark	2022–23
	13 percent decrease on benchmark	2023–24
	20 percent decrease on benchmark	2024–25
	25 percent decrease on benchmark	2025–26

Footnotes

1. An error is significant if it could mislead a user as to the value of a statistical indicator of national or state importance.

2. <https://dsbb.imf.org/sdds> (<https://dsbb.imf.org/sdds>)

3. Each Census is implemented over a five-year period and as such, targets for this measure change each year to reflect the major phases of Census. Targets relevant to the years covered by this Plan are included here.

4. Quality and trust measures were included in the ABS Corporate Plan 2021-22 and reported in the ABS Annual Report 2021-22. The 2021 Census achieved a response rate of 96.1% and nearly 80% of respondents expressed support through an independent survey of user sentiment towards the 2021 Census.

5. The ABS uses case studies based on Tier 1 (Significant Projects) and seeks to prioritise case study selection of those projects with a high likelihood of completion in the reporting period.

6. Case study topics listed for this measure are reported against for only the first year covered by this Plan i.e. 2022–23. Each year, new case studies are selected for reporting against this measure.

7. Based on a benchmark value in 2020–21 of 100.

8. The ABS is no longer delivering data leadership training for APS SES officers and so the previous measure of attendance by SES at data leadership training has not been retained as a measure from 2022–23. The APS Academy is delivering this training.

9. Case study topics listed for this measure are reported against for only the first year covered by this Plan i.e. 2022–23. Each year, new case studies are selected for reporting against this measure.

10. Based on a benchmark value of 338,964 hours from 2020–21.